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Mayor Ruthanne Fuller
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

RE: RFP # 21-79 | Supportive Services and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment

To Whom It May Concern:

Metro West Collaborative Development ("Metro West CD") and Civico Development, LLC ("Civico") (jointly, the "Sponsor") submitted a response to the request for proposals ("RFP") for redevelopment of the former West Newton Armory (the "Armory") on September 30, 2021. On December 10, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller and Planning Department Director Barney Heath requested the Sponsor provide additional information about supportive services, diversity, equity, and inclusion before being designated as developer.

Supportive Services at the Newton Armory

Introduction

Metro West CD will provide an integrated resident services program to identify and address the needs of each household at the Armory upon move-in and on an ongoing basis through a "Housing for Success" model. This will include Metro West CD and Maloney Properties, Inc. ("Maloney") staff. Maloney, the property management and resident services provider, provides property management services for over 10,000 units of mixed-use, market rate, and affordable housing in over 100 New England communities. Founded in 1981, Maloney is a successful women-owned business with a diverse staff of over 400 employees, 52% of whom are Asian, African American, and Latino. Maloney's diverse staff enables them to provide management services that reduce or eliminate cultural and linguistic barriers. In addition, 20% of the company is minority-owned.

Staffing

Metro West CD in collaboration with Maloney will develop a plan that adequately supports the resident population at the Armory, creating linkages to the broader Newton community. Metro West CD's Resident Services Coordinator ("RSC") will serve as the liaison between the Sponsor and the residents of the Armory, working closely with Maloney to engage with, and support, residents at all stages of tenancy. The RSC will have responsibilities to other Metro West CD residents, but will, at minimum, dedicate 15-hours per week to residents of the Armory.



Maloney will have a full-time on-site Property Manager (“PM”) located in the management office in the east wing of the headhouse. The PM will meet monthly, and on an as-needed basis, with the RSC. A separate office provides residents the opportunity to meet with the RSC privately. The Metro West CD and Maloney will explore partnerships with other Newton-based service providers to provide targeted information sessions, training, and services that amplify the resident experience. The large community room provides opportunities for group programming.

The Role of the Resident Services Coordinator

The Resident Services Coordinator position will be staffed by Metro West CD. The RSC is responsible for social and community activities, like a resident council, periodic newsletter, social events, and new resident orientations. Because the Metro West CD main office is expected to be located on the second floor of the Armory, the RSC will spend substantial time on-site and have the greatest opportunity for frequent informal rapport-building with residents. As such, they will act as the first line of identification and intervention for families in need and will assist in connecting residents to services that meet their needs. The RSC is the coordinator, not provider of, resident support services. They also serve as an advocate for, and coach to, residents seeking services.

The Role of the Property Manager

The Property Manager shares responsibility with the Resident Services Coordinator for establishing the structure and creation of a working Resident Council overseeing program development. The PM will also be responsible for day-to-day functions of the Armory including maintenance coordination, rent collection, and reporting.

Services

Residents will undergo a needs assessment and household services planning process immediately upon move-in to the Armory. This is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue between the RSC, PM, and resident to ensure the resident thrives at the Armory. Feedback, and the unique profile of Armory residents at any given time, will inform the evolution of the resident services program.

Although the supportive service needs of Armory residents will vary, these types of services are expected to be part of the overall program.

1. **Eviction Avoidance** - Tenancy preservation is a crucial prerequisite to robust service delivery. Most evictions are the result of failure to pay, and Maloney abides by a policy of working with any resident that experiences financial difficulty. Maloney has relationships with many agencies whose missions are to provide rent relief and regularly connects residents to these resources. Residents are provided whatever information is necessary to leverage relief funds. If the potential eviction is the result of non-financial issues, the services team will collaborate with the resident to identify solutions to preserve tenancy.
2. **Workforce Development and Economic Mobility** - Economic mobility includes a broad range of resources from connecting residents to benefits or entitlements, to skill building, to advancing a resident’s homeownership goals. Programming may include how to budget; bank account maintenance; credit services; taxes and financial planning; and first-time homebuyer classes. Resident needs vary considerably relative to workforce and economic needs. The needs



assessment at the beginning of tenancy, as well as the RSC’s “open door policy,” are critical to managing these changing needs over time.

3. **Health, Mental Health, and Wellness** - This is a broad category that will include group activities like yoga classes to simple interventions like providing signs by the elevator encouraging the use of stairs. As an intergenerational community designed to accommodate people at all life stages, age-specific supportive services for parents with young children or seniors will be important for the Armory. Specific to this site, we will implement a community gardening program that may include springtime garden bed preparation, gardening classes, or nutrition programming. We plan to leverage the on-site gardening amenities to explore drivers and solutions to food insecurity, which is an important social determinant of health. Linkages to local organizations and Newton’s Health and Human Services department will be important to expand access to resources for Armory residents.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment

Accessibility

The Armory was designed to facilitate the needs of people with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. There are four wheelchair accessible ADA units (all of which are CBH compliant). All common areas of the property are fully accessible, and all units are visitable.

Metro West CD and WATCH CDC Collaborative

Newton-Wellesley Hospital will invest \$1.9 million over four years into a WATCH CDC and Metro West CD collaborative to address housing insecurity, reducing its impact on mental health, and increasing economic independence through mentorship. This investment will bolster existing case management-based housing programming, emphasizing serving low-income and immigrant tenants. The collaborative will also heighten awareness of the mental health needs of clients experiencing housing insecurity, with the assistance of a mental health consultant, and provide emergency financial assistance at its clinics. In addition, the collaborative will hire a Job and Financial Planning Coordinator to mentor clients to greater financial self-sufficiency.

Racial Equity Pledge

Racial equity is foundational to the work of Metro West CD. Metro West CD was an early adopter of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (“MACDC”) racial equity pledge. By signing the pledge, Metro West CD agreed to embrace the four values listed below and commit to implementing at least one specific action toward advancing each of these values within the next year:

- 1) We commit to learning and addressing the different levels of racism so we can take action to dismantle those inequities.
- 2) We believe that our staff should be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and representative of the communities we serve.
- 3) We believe that our board should be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and representative of the communities we serve.



- 4) We believe in authentic representation in our programming/services.

General Contractor/Construction Manager

The General Contractor will be contractually obligated to obtain:

- At least twenty percent (20%) of the value of all construction, goods and professional services from W/MBE;
- At least five percent (5%) of all worker hours performed by Contractor and its subcontractors in connection with the Project from women; and
- At least thirty percent (30%) of all worker hours performed by Contractor and its subcontractors in connection with the Project from minorities.

The General Contractor will present a plan before contract execution that describes how M/WBEs and workers are to be identified and engaged. They will provide monthly reports to the sponsor regarding hiring performance and any plan adjustments that may be necessary. The sponsor will facilitate recruitment and hiring as appropriate including facilitating outreach to diverse constituencies to insure a broad exposure to possible respondents.

Other Consultants

The following members of the sponsor's team are WBEs:

- Sustainability Consultant - Lambert Sustainability LLC
- Civil Engineer - Nitsch Engineering, Inc.
- Landscape Architect - RBLA Design, Inc.
- Property Manager - Maloney Properties, Inc.

The sponsor will actively seek out additional M/WBEs to perform other project-related services. The majority of revenue earning opportunities for vendors in an affordable housing development are during the construction phase. On a relative basis, approximately 85% of the contract value is from construction activities, with 15% from general development. Therefore, the sponsor's M/WBE goals have the greatest opportunity for financial impact if prioritized during construction.

Metro West Collaborative Development and Civico Development are committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in their respective organizations and communities. The Armory is an opportunity to, in collaboration with a progressive municipality, identify other creative opportunities to encourage women and minority participation during the lifecycle of a development project. We look forward to ongoing dialogue about the meaningful advancement of these goals.